

5 August 1999

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Commissioner Jane Henney, M.D.
Food and Drug Administration (HF-1)
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville MD 20857

Dear Commissioner Henney:

Respected groups, including the World Health Organization and the Union of Concerned Scientists, recommend a ban on the use of medically important antibiotics to promote animal growth.

Overprescribing lifesaving antibiotics has created a looming public health crisis. This has become increasingly clear as once easily curable illnesses no longer respond to previously effective drugs. Although drugs given to animals contribute to antibiotic resistance in human diseases, livestock producers have used antibiotics on hogs, cows, and chickens for decades. In fact, about a third of the antibiotics manufactured in the U.S. are currently added to animal feed to fatten livestock.

We cannot justify this damage to human health for the minimal savings in the cost of meat production. I urge the FDA to follow the WHO recommendation by withdrawing approvals for the use of medically important antibiotics for growth promotion in livestock.

Sincerely,



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